

live because of the tax provision in respect of depreciation of their assets. Many of them do not earn enough to entitle them to contribute to the plan.

I believe there should be some way of enabling people in such a situation to join the plan and catch up with their payments in more profitable years. Unless this can be arranged, they will have to turn to other types of insurance in an effort to make provision for their old age. It is no fault of theirs that their income has been drastically reduced or cut off altogether.

In many ways, the quota system has been a factor in preventing many farmers qualifying for the benefits of Canada Pension Plan. The amount a farmer can produce and sell is limited. Then, too, there are the effects of adverse weather. Go to northern Alberta today and you will see valuable crops lying on the ground, so bad have been weather conditions for the past two months. Surely we should be able to amend the act so that people who are confronted with misfortunes of this kind can still take part in the plan.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hollands: One of the features I have been very concerned about since I have been in Ottawa is the disability section of the act. Last week I received a letter from a farmer in my constituency whose only means of support was his quarter section farm. He had been in hospital, two discs had been removed from his back. He is unable to work, so he wrote and asked whether I could help him to receive benefit under the Canada Pension Plan. It is a tragic thing. I went to see this man at his house. He was barely able to walk. But the answer he received from the officials of the Canada Pension Plan, after the man had undergone a medical examination, was that he was able to do light work.

Mr. Paproski: Shame!

Mr. Hollands: I am sure hon. members of the House who supported the plan when it was brought in, imagined that our citizens in this kind of trouble would be helped.

Mr. Baker: Or given the benefit of the doubt.

Mr. Hollands: It seems to be one of the jobs of a member of parliament to try to break through the large volume of red tape and bureaucracy which surrounds so many government programs.

Mr. Paproski: A government which does not care.

Mr. Hollands: Yes, I think you are right.

An hon. Member: Don't get mean, now.

Mr. Hollands: The other question I am concerned about is this. What happens to the money in the Canada Pension Plan? We all know that contributions are deducted from our pay cheques if we are employed, and we all know money is sent out to those who qualify for pensions. But what about the money in the middle? I find that the province of Ontario, for example, has been able to draw \$2,560 million out of the plan. Alberta has drawn \$428 million. I can find no regulation governing the use of this

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money by the provinces. It is conceivable, therefore, that a province could build highways with the money, or it might invest the funds in projects which were not revenue-producing. So when the time comes to pay back these funds, the young people, the work force in the provinces will be taxed again so that the funds may be repaid.

It is probably a good thing that there should be a large pool of money available in Canada from which projects can be financed. But a great responsibility attaches to any government charged with handling the funds of the Canada Pension Plan and I believe we should ensure, for the good of the country, that the money is earning the maximum possible interest. For example, if we were to take this fantastic sum of money and invest it in housing, I have no doubt the effect would be to reduce the rate of interest which many of our people are paying today. It could lead to a reduction in interest rates.

Quebec is getting the best deal to the extent that it raises its own money and does not need to borrow. I cannot for the life of me understand why other provinces did not opt out of the plan. I would think that if a similar opportunity arose today, many provinces would opt out of it. I should like to see the monetary aspects of the plan handled in such a way as to benefit not only the people of Canada who collect pensions but also the working people who contribute. After all, it is the young people of today who are keeping the pension plan going.

● (1740)

I hope that before too long the government will bring in further amendments to the Canada Pension Plan Act which will make the plan a little more human and will also take into consideration what our ultimate aim is, in view of the tremendous amount of money which has been built up in the fund since 1965.

Mr. Ross Whicher (Bruce): Mr. Speaker, I hope to be very brief since there are only a few minutes remaining, and perhaps some other member will be able to speak before six o'clock. I want to say that I, like every other hon. member who has spoken in this debate, am in favour of Bill C-224. Ever since the Canada Pension Plan came into being, I have admired it. Quite frankly, it is the way I like to do business. A young person takes money out of his pocket and, in co-operation with his employer, puts money away for when he is older. The fund is self-sustaining, or has been up to the present time.

I am only sorry that the Canada Pension Plan as it is now set up did not start many years ago. If it had, and if it had been modelled on the same lines as the United States social security plan, then in my view we would not be in the welfare tangle and mess that we are in Canada today. Surely it is better for a young man and lady to learn as soon as they start working that there is not a great deal in this life that is free, that they have to save a certain amount of money in order to look after themselves in their old age.

Regretfully, this has not, in my opinion, happened in Canada. I must point out that even though we feel that because of circumstances we must embark upon this course, the old age pension has had two increases during the last few months, costing a fantastic amount of money,